

REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending in the application. Claims 2 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice herein. Amendments to claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 25, and 29 have been submitted for entry after final. These amendments include definitional language inserted to address the issue raised by the Examiner. It is respectfully submitted that the claim amendments raise no new issues and would simplify issues for appeal. The material added to independent claims 1, 14, and 29 by the amendments (i.e., “perpendicular to the support direction”) was inherently present in the originally submitted claims. Also, the added feature to claims 1, 14, and 29, i.e., “wherein the supporting member has a bellow ...,” is originally recited in claim 2 (or claim 15). Thus, these amendments are not believed to raise new issues which would require further consideration and/or search. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants would like to acknowledge with appreciation the indicated allowability of claims 2-13, and 15-26 subject to overcoming the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and being rewritten in independent form.

Independent claims 1, 14, and 29 have been amended herein to incorporate the feature recited in claim 2 (or claim 15), which has been indicated to be allowable. Therefore, independent claims 1, 14, and 29, and their dependent claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

II. DRAWINGS

Applicants herein submit a formal version of original, hand-drawn Fig. 21, which contains the label “Fig. 21.” Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

III. REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1-33 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 14, and 29 have been amended to recite “in a lateral direction perpendicular to the support direction” as the Examiner suggested. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1, 14, AND 27-33 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claims 1 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,218,257 (“Tozoni”). Claims 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable based on the Tozoni patent. Claims 29-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable based on U.S. Patent No. 5,780,943 (“Ono”) and the Tozoni patent.

As discussed above in section I of this paper, independent claims 1, 14, and 29 have been amended herein to incorporate the feature recited in claim 2 (or claim 15), which has been indicated to be allowable. Therefore, independent claims 1, 14, and 29, and their dependent claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

V. CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request a Notice of Allowance at an early date. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 510-843-6200, ext. 245.

Respectfully submitted,
BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Haruo Yawata' in a stylized, cursive script.

Haruo Yawata
Limited Recognition under 37 CFR § 10.9(b)

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